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DE RUEHOT #0172 0351626
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 041626Z FEB 08
FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7246
INFO RUCNCCAN/ALL CANADIAN POSTS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY 0233

UNCLAS OTTAWA 000172

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL PHUM SY CA
SUBJECT: CANADA ON SYRIAN POLITICAL DISSIDENTS

REF: A. OTTAWA 0024

1B. 07 STATE 171106

11. (SBU) According to Director of the Middle East Division of the Department of Foreign Affairs Michael Grant, Canada decided to make a public statement in Damascus (text in para 2) in lieu of a demarche to the Syrian government in response to reftel demarche. Its embassy issued the statement on January 31.

12. (U) Begin Text

Canada is deeply concerned about the arrest of Riad Seif, a respected member of Syrian civil society. This development has renewed Canada's deep concerns over the human rights situation in Syria, as it follows the recent detention of other civil society activists associated with the "Damascus Declaration."

We urge Syria to take all possible steps to ensure that domestic law and practices are in keeping with Syria's international human rights obligations, including as they pertain to arbitrary arrest and detention, freedom of movement, minimum guarantees for judicial proceedings, freedom of opinion and expression, and freedom of association.

End Text

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